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M^r. CLARKE in the Character of PROCLES.
Thou Queen of Souls! Thou rapture of my Vows!
what means this pensiver Mood?

Mallett, David
BELL'S EDITION.

E U R Y D I C E.

A TRAGEDY.

As written by Mr. MALLETT.

DISTINGUISHING ALSO THE

VARIATIONS OF THE THEATRE,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane.

Regulated from the Prompt-Book,

By PERMISSION of the MANAGERS,

By Mr. HOPKINS, Prompter.



London:

Printed for JOHN BELL, near Exeter-Exchange, in the Strand.

MDCCLXXVII.

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A67
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TO HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF

M O N T R O S E.

My Lord,

I Beg leave to shelter the following tragedy under your patronage ; a small, but sincere return of gratitude for the many obligations I have to your Grace, and in particular, for the generous concern with which you espoused and supported the interest of this performance : and to which I am greatly indebted for its reputation and success.

Permit me to add, in justice to your Grace, (and I do it with equal pride and pleasure) that I received this indulgence without being obliged to pay for it that adulation and baseness of heart, which is sometimes exacted by the vulgar great ; but is more frequently the voluntary, ill-judged offering of mean and venial writers. I am, with the truest zeal and attachment,

My Lord,

Your Grace's most obliged,

And most faithful servant,

D. M A L L E T.

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P R O L O G U E.

Written by AARON HILL, Esq.

IN youth when modesty and merit meet,
 How rare the union, and the force how sweet !
 Tho' at small praise our humble author aims,
 His friend may give him what his blush disclaims.
 Ladies—to you he makes his chief address ;
 Form'd to be pray'd to, and even born to bless ;
 He feels your power himself, and makes it felt ;
 His scenes will teach each stubborn heart to melt ;
 And each fair eye that now shines softly here,
 Anon shall shine still softer thro' a tear.

Let not constraint your gen'rous sighs repress,
 Nor veil compassion, nor repel distress.
 Your sex's strength is in such weakness found,
 And sighs and tears but help your charms to wound.

Of all the wonders taught us by the fair,
 'Tis strangest, tragedy should lose their care !
 Where Love, soft tyrant, in full glory reigns,
 And sovereign beauty holds the world in chains.
 Less polish'd, and more bold, the comic muse
 Unkings your Cupid, or obstructs his views,
 Upholds presuming wit's familiar claim,
 And blots out awe from love's diminish'd flame ;
 Finds or makes faults, and sets them strong in sight,
 And dares draw woman false, or vain, or light.
 While tragedy, your servant try'd and true,
 Still to your fame devoted, and to you,
 Enslav'd to love, subdu'd ambition brings,
 Firms beauty's power, and crowns it king of kings.

Let wish'd attention grace our scene to-night,
 And mourn'd afflictions move refin'd delight.
 Each tender light of life we recommend,
 Wife, husband, subject, parent, son, and friend ;
 All your impassion'd int'rests shall engage,
 And hopes, and fears, and pity, fire the stage.

Then, when soft sorrow swells the fair-one's breast,
 And sad impressions mix with nightly rest,
 Pleasing remembrance shall our scene supply,
 And the sweet saddening influence never die.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

M E N.

Drury-Lane.

<i>Procles</i> , Tyrant of <i>Epidaurus</i> , in Possession of the Crown of <i>Corinth</i> .	— Mr. Clarke.
<i>Medon</i> , his Favourite,	— Mr. Packer.
<i>Leonidas</i> , a Nobleman, secretly in the Queen's interest,	— Mr. Davies.
<i>Periander</i> , King of <i>Corinth</i> ,	— Mr. Garrick.
<i>Polydore</i> , his Son,	— Mr. Holland.
<i>Ariston</i> ,	— Mr. Burton.

W O M E N.

<i>Eurydice</i> , Queen of <i>Corinth</i> ,	— Mrs. Cibber.
<i>Melissa</i> , her Confidante,	— Miss Haughton.

Officers, Guards, Attendants.

SCENE, CORINTH.

EURYDICE.

E U R Y D I C E.

* * * The lines distinguished by inverted commas, ‘thus,’ are omitted in the Representation, and those printed in Italics are the additions of the Theatre.

A C T I.

Eurydice and Melissa.

[Thunder.]

EURYDICE.

YE heavenly Powers !

What means this dreadful war of sea and sky ?

Mel. Dreadful, indeed ! It rose not by degrees, But all at once, a tempest wild and loud.

Eur. Hear, from the wint’ry north how keen it howls Thro’ these lone towers, that rock with every blast, Each moment threatening ruin on our heads ! But see — stand here, and cast thy eyes below, O’er the broad ocean to the distant sky, See what confusion fills the raving deep ! What mountain-waves arise ! — ’Tis terrible, And suiting to the horrors of my fate, The deep despair that desolates my soul.

Mel. Ha ! look, behold, due west, where yonder rocks O’er-hang the beating tides — Oh, sight of woe ! Four goodly ships, abandon’d to the storm, Drive blindly with the billows, their drench’d sails Stripp’d off, and whil’d before the rending wind.

Eur. Assist them, all good Powers ! The storm is high, And the flood perilous. Look, now they climb a fearful steep, and hang On the big surge that mixes with the clouds. Save me ! it bursts, and headlong down they reel

Inte

Into the yawning gulph. They cannot 'scape.
A sea rowls o'er the foremost.

Mel. Ah ! she strikes

On yonder wave-worn cliff. The fatal shock
Has doubtless shiver'd her strong side. She sinks
So swiftly down, that scarce the straining eye
Can trace her tallest mast. Where is she now ?
Hid in the wild abyss, with all her crew,
All lost for ever !

Eur. Turn we from the fight,
Too dismal for a woman's eye to bear.—
Ill-fated men ! whom, knowing not, I mourn ;
Whence, or what may they be ? Even now, perhaps,
In some far distant land, a faithful wife,
Or tender parent, offers vows to Heaven
For their return, and fondly numbers up
The ling'ring months of absence. Fruitless love !
They never more shall meet ! — By my own ills
Severely taught, I pity them : yet think
Their fate, all full of horror as it seems,
Is rather to be envy'd. They are now
Beyond the hand of fate, at rest for ever ;
While I, Melissa—

Mel. Ah, Eurydice,
My royal mistress, rather think the gods
Would teach you, by this fight of mournful ruin,
Patience and gentler thought. When others too
Are miserable, not to know the worst
Is some degree of bliss.

Eur. Melissa, no.

I tell thee, no ill fate, no face of death
Can be so dreadful as a life like mine.
Call back to thy remembrance what I've been :
How happy in a husband, and a son
The rising boast of Greece ! Behold me now
Cast down to lowest infamy ; the slave,
The sport of a foul tyrant, who betray'd me,
And would destroy my honour. Gracious Heaven !
And shall this bold offender, who has broke
All bonds of holy faith, yet bids his soul
Rejoice and take her ease ; shall he long triumph
Here in the throne of Corinth, while its lord,

E U R Y D I C E.

The great, unhappy Periander, roams
An unknown fugitive ?

Mel. These tears, my Queen,
These faithful tears, which sympathising sorrow
Draws from my eyes, speak the sad share I take
In all your mighty ills.

Eur. Say, now, Melissa,
Is there among the daughters of affliction,
One so forlorn as poor Eurydice ?
A prisoner here, subjected to the power
Of impious Procles, daily doom'd to hear,
Oh, deadly insult ! his detested love.
What ill can equal this ? Why did I trust
The brutal tyrant ?

Mel. See, his minion's here.

Enter Medon.

Med. Hail, beauteous Queen ! By me, the royal Procles
With lowly service bends him to your charins ;
Bids smiling health, and gentle peace of mind
Light up your morn, and make your evening fair.
This, with the tenderest vows —

Eur. Canst thou inform me
Of those unhappy men, whom I but now
Saw perish on this coast ?

Med. Not who they are ;
But what their fate, these eyes with dread beheld.
The King too, from the morning's chace return'd,
At this sad sight spurr'd on with all his train,
To save, if possible, whom the wild sea
Casts forth upon the land. But first his love,
That counts each moment's absence from your eyes
An age of ling'ring torment, bade me fly
With health and greeting to the matchless fair,
Who holds his soul enslav'd.

Eur. Then bear him back,
From her whom he has wrong'd, betray'd, and ruin'd,
Horror and loathing, unrelenting scorn,
And all a woman's hate, in just return
For his detested love. The tyrant coward !
To crush the fallen and helpless, to embitter
The pangs, the miseries himself has caus'd,
With gall of mockery !

Med.

Med. Your pardon, Madam,
 If I, the humblest of your slaves, presume
 To place before your eyes in faithful prospect,
 That mournful period, full of dread and danger,
 Which late you saw. Behold then your false subjects,
 Wantonly mad, and spurning every tie
 Of sworn obedience, mix'd in one bold treason,
 Threat'ning and universal : your lost husband
 Absent, involv'd in unsuccessful war ;
 His troops averse and mutinous. From them
 Bold faction with contagious swiftness spread
 To Corinth too, where the wild herd arous'd
 Insulted you, and drove you to this fortress.
 Say, where was then your hope, when meagre Famine
 Join'd his devouring ravage, and your eyes
 Saw daily, hourly perish, those poor few
 Whose faith had kept them yours ?

Eur. Oh, would to Heaven,
 I then had perish'd too !

Med. Such was your state,
 Lost even to hope, when generous Procles flew
 Impatient to your aid, dispers'd and quell'd
 The general treason. May I dare to urge
 These services ! But what are these ; his throne,
 His heart is yours ; he lays them at your feet ;
 He bids you reign in both.

Eur. Thou base of heart !
 To slaves like thee, who flatter and inflame
 Their prince's crimes, are owing half the plagues
 That curse mankind. Has not thy cruel master,
 Whose guilt this shameful praise of thine brings home
 On thy own soul, say, has he not usurp'd,
 With perfidy avow'd, the very crown
 He swore to save ? And I too — thy bold insult
 Shews I indeed am wretched. But, away ;
 'Tis base to parle with thee, the sycophant
 Who leads him on from guilt to guilt, and swears
 He grows a god by sinning. [Exit Medon.]

Mel. Ah, my Queen !
 My heart forebodes some fatal consequence
 Will grow of this.

Eur. Why, let it come, Melissa.

I merit all that fortune can inflict,
For trusting this betrayer, this curs'd Procles.

Mel. Alas ! what could you do ?

Eur. I should have dy'd.

He was the known and mortal foe of Corinth.

Mel. Yet his fair-seeming might have won belief
From doubting age, or wary policy.

By frequent, urgent message, he conjur'd you
To save yourself. With open honour own'd
His ancient enmity ; but, by each power,
Celestial and infernal, swore 'twas past :
Nay, more, that as a king and as a man,
Just indignation at your impious subjects,
And pity of your fate, had touch'd his heart.

Eur. But Fame had spoke him faithless, bold, ambitious.

No, 'twas the coward woman in my soul,
Th' inglorious fear of dying, that betray'd
My virtue into the deceiver's power.

For this, my heart, each conscious hour upbraids me,
As faithless to my trust, weak, and unworthy
Even of the base, precarious life I hold.

For this, Oh, crown of misery ! I'm doom'd,
Daily to hear the tyrant's impious passion,
His horrid vows and oaths.

Mel. That way indeed

I dread to turn my thoughts. A soul so brutal,
And flown with nightly insolence and wine,
What may he not attempt ?

‘ *Eur.* Oh, curse, to know
‘ That I am in his power, and yet compell'd
‘ To suffer hated life ! — for can I die
‘ Unheard, unjustify'd, while yet perhaps
‘ Th' unhappy Periander thinks too hardly
‘ Of my late error ? — King of gods and men ?
‘ Whose universal eye beholds each thought
‘ Most secret in the soul, give me to clear
‘ My faith to him ; I ask of Heaven no more
‘ For my past miseries.

‘ *Mel.* What shouts are these ? [*Looking out.*]
‘ Ah, me ! th' inhuman triumph of the crowd,
‘ The hard-soul'd many, who have watch'd the storm,
‘ For driving wrecks, the spoils of perish'd wretches.

Eur.

‘ *Eur.* Unfeeling beasts of prey !—Methinks the storm
 Is almost overblown. The waves subside,
 And fall their fiercer roarings. But, alas,
 Of all the four, not one remaining sail
 Is to be seen around.’

Mel. Either my eyes
 Deceive me, or the good Leonidas
 Bends hitherward his steps, and on his brow
 Sits some afflicting thought.

Eur. Ha ! whence is this ;
 What mean these secret shiverings, this dark horror
 Of some approaching ill ?

Enter Leonidas.

Leon. Forgive me, Madam,
 That I appear before you to impart
 A mournful message ; but by Procles’ order —

Eur. Whate’er proceeds from him, Leonidas,
 Must needs be fatal to me. But say on.
 No form of ruin is so dreadful now,
 As being in his power.

Leon. Unhappy Queen !
 Your fate might melt the hardest breast, and teach
 Even Cruelty’s remorseless eye to weep.
 How shall I speak the rest ?

Eur. Leonidas,
 What is this fatal tale, too sad for utterance ?
 Alas ! why dost thou weep, why turn thy eyes
 Severe on heaven ?

Leon. This ruinous storm,
 Whose sudden outrage —

Eur. Ha ! what ships were these,
 Say, speak, that sunk but now before our eyes,
 In sight of shore ?

Leon. The very fleet design’d
 To rescue you ; to free repenting Corinth
 From this betrayer, this detested Procles.
 The King was there embark’d.

Eur. Then all is lost !

Mel. Ah, Heaven ! she faints.

Leon. Behold, ye gods ! this sight,
 Remember the curs’d author of this ruin.—
 My eyes, my soul’s in tears to see her thus.

Eur.

Eur. Oh, Periander, my much-injur'd Lord,
Would I had dy'd for thee! — Ah, gentle maid!
Was it then he, my husband, whom these eyes
Saw perish in the storm; whose fate I wept,
Nor knew that all the cruel wreck was mine?

Mel. Unhappy day!

‘ *Eur.* Undone Eurydice!

‘ But I will die — I should have dy'd before,
‘ When my mean cowardice, my dread of death,
‘ Betray'd me to false Procles. I had then
‘ Dy'd innocent; I had not then deserv'd
‘ A ruin'd husband's curse. Oh, thought of horror!
‘ Perhaps his latest breath, even in the hour
‘ Of dreadful fate, charg'd me with all his wrongs,
‘ His life and honour lost, perhaps expir'd
‘ In imprecations on me.

‘ *Mel.* Oh, for pity,

‘ Forbear these fatal thoughts! they but inflame
‘ The rage of real ills, and wound you deeper.’

Leon. Would tears, my gracious mistress, aught avail us,
Methinks these aged eyes could number drops
With falling clouds, or the perpetual stream.
But while we mourn our enemy rejoices,
And sounds his cruel triumph loud to heaven.
If I have bow'd me to his impious will,
Tho' with that strong abhorrence nature feels
At what she holds most mortal; 'twas to turn
Against the traitor his own treacherous arts,
And ruin him more surely. This may be.
Sad Corinth looks with horror on the hand
That scourges her each hour with whips of scorpions.
She waits but some fair chance, at once to rise
And drive him from her throne.

[*A Flourish.*

Mel. These trumpets speak
His near approach.

Eur. Father of human kind,
Eternal Justice, hear these guilty sounds,
Behold this tyrant's revel, while a king,
Thy great resemblance, floats a cold pale corse,
Or on the naked beach cast vilely out,
Unknown, unhonour'd lies! — Leonidas,
By all my griefs, I beg thee, search these shores,

Each cliff and cavern where the wild wave beats,
For my lov'd Lord, and to these widow'd arms
Give back his dear remains. ‘ But Procles comes.’

[*Exeunt Eur. and Mel.*]

Enter Procles, Medon, and Attendants.

Proc. Hail, glorious Day ! auspicious Fortune, hail !
From this triumphant hour my future life
Runs fair and smiling on. The bold attempt,
Laid dark and deep by my most dreaded foe,
Is perish'd with its author. From on high
Heaven arm'd his winds and seas to fight for me ;
And victory is mine without my care,
Almost without my knowledge. Yes, the gods,
The gods themselves, espouse my happy cause !
For this, let flowery garlands wreath their shrines ;
Let hecatombs before their altars bleed,
And triumph reign thro' Corinth. [*Attendants withdraw.*]
Is the Queen
Inform'd of all, Leonidas ?

Leon. She is.

Proc. And she receiv'd the news —

Leon. With sad surprise,
And many tears, my Lord.

Proc. Just the fond sex.

Such their vain grief ; a moment's passing storm,
Then all is calm. Be it thy farther care,
As the receding flood forsakes the shore,
To make strict search thro' all this coast around
For Periander's corpse. I would, methinks,
A while indulge my eyes, a while peruse
The features of a rival once so fam'd,
So terrible in arms ; whose partial fortune
Soar'd high above, and ever thwarted mine
In all the dearer aims that swell my thought,
Love and ambition.

Leon. Mark this, righteous Heaven ! [*Afside. Exit.*]

Med. At length, Sir, all the gods declare for you,
And fortune is your own. Your native realm,
Fair Epidaurus, peaceful and resign'd,
Acknowledges her Lord. Your rival's fate
Confirms his kingdom yours.

Proc. Yet I am still

Unbless'd

Unbless'd amid this flow of prosp'rous fortune.
Not all the charms ambition's shoreless wish.
Empire and kneeling homage, can bestow
The better joy I long for.

Med. Ah, my Prince !
Forget, or scorn that proud, ill-natur'd fair-one !
Proc. Impossible. By Heaven, my soul can form
No wish, no thought but her. I tell thee, Medon,
With blushes tell thee, this proud charmer reigns
Unbounded o'er my reason. I have try'd
Each shape, each art of varied love, to win her ;
‘ Alternate prayers and threats, the soothing skill
‘ Of passionate sincerity, the fire
‘ Of rapturous vows ; but all these arts were vain :
‘ Her rooted hate is not to be remov'd.’
And 'twas my soul's first aim, the towering point
Of all my wishes, to prevail in this,
To triumph o'er my rival too in love.
That had been great revenge ! but baffled here,
I'm disappointed still.

Med. Believe me, Sir,
When once the fit of wilfulness is o'er,
The burst of tears discharg'd, she'll quickly soften,
Stoop to your wishes, and forget a husband
Who is no more.

Proc. Perdition on his name !
I dread his memory as my rival still.
But if I have not won her to be mine,
At least, the hated husband reap'd no joy
From her fantastic honour. Stung to madness,
For ill-requited love, I darkly spread
Surmises of her truth. He thought her false ;
And, as he doated on her, the dire tale
Was poison to his quiet. Jealousy,
In all its horrors, must have seiz'd his soul.
I triumph'd there !

Med. 'Twas exquisite revenge.
I too, my Lord, who live but for your pleasure,
Your ever-faithful slave, I too combin'd
To aid your vengeance. You can still remember,
When in a dungeon's depth Ariston lay,
Ariston, Periander's factious friend.

With looks of seeming pity, I oft mourn'd
 His hard imprisonment; complain'd of you,
 Nay, curs'd your cruelty, 'till I had brought
 His unsuspecting honesty to credit
 My fiction of the Queen. I told him then,
 With well-dissembled hatred of her crime,
 Embittering every circumstance; that she,
 Forgetful of her better fame, had heard
 Your secret passion, and with equal ardor
 Return'd its warmth. Nay, that she often urg'd you
 To wreak your rage on him, the hated friend
 Of Periander. Having thus alarm'd him,
 After a long pause, I let him 'scape at last,
 To find his master out.

Proc. I thank thee, Medon.

But this avails not much. My soul burns in me,
 With furious longings to subdue that woman;
 To bend her pride of virtue to my passion.
 I fancy, in her arms transcendent joys,
 A heaven of higher bliss, not to be found
 In unresisting beauty, woo'd and won
 At idle leisure. Yet once more I mean
 To try the fortune of my wishes with her;
 And if I am repuls'd, away, at once,
 All little arts of love.

Med. Mean while, the banquet,
 Which pleasure's curious hand hath furnish'd out
 With splendid choice, awaits you, and invites
 To laughing thought and triumph. There the god,
 Th' inspiring god of wine, with rose-buds crown'd,
 Mirth in his look, and at his side the band
 Of little playful loves, fills high the bowl,
 And bids it flow unbounded. Music too
 Joins her enchanting voice, and woos the soul
 With all her powerful skill of moving strains,
 Till the gay hour is quite dissolv'd in bliss,
 In ecstacy of revel, all unknown
 To lean-look'd Temperance, and his peevish train.

Proc. Come on then, Medon. Life is vainly short,
 A very dream of being: and when death
 Has quench'd this finer flame that moves the heart,
 Beyond is all oblivion, and waste night,

That

That knows no following dawn ; where we shall be
As we had never been. The present then
Is only ours : and shall we let it pass,
Untasted, unenjoy'd ? No, let us on.
Hail we the rising shade ! and now, while night
Leads on the secret hour of free delight,
With wanton gaiety, in naked state,
Let music, mirth and love around us wait.

[*Exeunt.*

END of the FIRST ACT.

A C T II.

SCENE, *a rocky Coast, terminated by a view of the Ocean.*

Enter Periander.

PERIANDER.

BY the pale glimmering of the falling moon,
Amid the broken windings of these rocks
I wander on forlorn, and find no place
To trust my head, or rest my weary steps.
Horror pursues me close. In each low blast,
And murmur of the main, methinks I hear
The murderous spies of Procles at my heels.
Thou mournful Queen of heaven ! and you, dread gods,
Who rule the fearful secrecy of night,
Behold me here, the sport of human chance,
A nameless wretch, a ruin hardly sav'd
From the devouring deep. There my last hopes,
My great revenge, lies buried. Is there more ?
Away, away ! a traitor fills my throne,
Triumphant in his crimes ; and I, the while,
Roam here a midnight fugitive. Yet this,
All this I could have borne. He was my foe,
The jealous rival of my power — But thou,
In whom my soul had treasur'd up her heaven,
Friendship, and faith, and love, Eurydice !
Thou to betray me !

' [*Letting himself fall against the Rock.*

Ha ! by the moon's sad beam, I can descry
The towers that hold this author of my shame.

' Nay, Procles too, perhaps —— and may not he,
 ' Even now —— confusion ! death ! he may, he does
 ' Invade my bed ! —— Oh, hell ! she smiles to hear
 ' The story of my fate ! —— And now they give
 ' A loose to impious joys. All-seeing Powers !
 ' And does your vengeance slumber ? Are your bolts
 ' Reserv'd for me alone ? —— Ha ! —— yet 'tis just.
 ' Conscience, that in the day of fortune's favour
 ' Securely slept, now rouzes into strong
 ' And dread conviction of her crime. I broke
 ' The sacred oath sworn to a dying father,
 ' To free my country from her chains. My soul
 ' Shakes as I roll this thought. Oh, Providence,
 ' Awfully just, tho' guilt may shut her eye,
 ' Thine ever wakes to mark, to trace, to punish !'

Enter Leonidas.

Leon. This way a distant sound alarm'd my ear ;
 Broken it seem'd to be ; the voice of mourning
 And deep distress. Methought it rose just here,
 From these deaf-sounding cliffs. But all is still,
 Save the hoarse deep yet working from the storm.
 Some Power direct my steps where I may find,
 By this faint moon-light, my lov'd master's corpse,
 To save his sacred reliques from the rage
 Of brutish tyranny —— Ha ! what art thou ?
 A man, or fear-form'd shadow of the night ?

Per. Leonidas !

Leon. The same. But speak again.

Per. Leonidas !

Leon. Ha ! can it be, ye Powers,
My royal Lord ?

Per. [Coming forward.] A wretch that has no name.

Leon. Oh, all ye gods ! may I believe my senses ?
 'Tis he ! my Prince ! —— Just Heaven, to thee I kneel,
 And thus adore thy gracious providence :
 'Tis most amazing !

Per. Rise, Leonidas.

I am beneath thy care. Thou feest me here
 The last of men, cast off by all good Powers ;
 Sav'd from the deep to be more lost on shore.

Leon. My king and master, tho' my heart bleeds in me,
 With all your mighty ills, I must again.

Bless that good Heaven whose providence has sav'd you.
 'Tis great ! 'tis wond'rous all ! But how, Oh, how
 Have you escap'd the tyrant's jealous search ?
 His guards with strict survey rang'd every cliff
 And hollow of these rocks.

Per. I'll tell thee then.

We were in sight of Corinth, when at once
 Broad darkness hid the sky ; at once the winds
 Roar'd with mad bluster o'er us, and the seas
 In rowling mountains rose. A storm so fierce,
 So big with ruin, baffled our best skill.
 Despair struck every heart. The ship ran round
 In giddy whirls, and bulg'd on some hid rock.
 Oh, dismal moment ! still methinks I hear
 The general, dying scream of multitudes,
 Just drowning in th' abyss. How poor a thing
 Is a king then, Leonidas ! — I grasp'd
 A floating wreck, the big sea roaring round me,
 And bursting o'er my head : ‘ but bury'd deep
 ‘ Beneath the whelming tide,’ at once I lost
 The light of heaven and life. A wave, it seems,
 Lodg'd me within a cavern's secret depth,
 Near yon tall mountain.

Leon. Miracle of fate !
 Sure God's immediate hand conducted it,
 Severely merciful — How shall I tell
 What pangs, what agonies of soul I felt
 At sight of your sad wreck ? — But, Sir, the Prince,
 What of his fate ?

Per. I know not what to think :
 But to be mine, it seems, is to be wretched.
 Half of my fleet, yet riding in the port,
 I left to his command, but with strict charge
 To sail a few hours after. ‘ ’Twere in vain
 ‘ To tell thee now the reason of my order.’
 This storm, I fear, may have surpris'd him too,
 Unhappy boy !

Leon. Your own escape, my Lord,
 So full of wonder, and beyond all hope,
 Inclines me to strong faith, that Heaven is still
 Concern'd for your affairs. But to behold ‘ you,
 ‘ So late the first and happiest of mankind,

‘ Alone

' Alone and wandering here at the dead hour ;'
 No roof but heaven's high cope to shelter you ;
 No couch but this unhospitable earth,
 To rest your brine-drench'd limbs—it kills my heart.
 Curse on the tyrant !

Per. Pr'ythee, think me not
 So poorly soul'd to stoop beneath the pressure
 Of Fortune's hand. That were to merit it.
 But there is still behind—Oh, death to honour !
 One crushing blow, that lays me low indeed!
 That sinks me in the dust !

Leon. What do I hear ?
 Your words amaze me !

Per. How, Leonidas !
 Surely thou art no stranger to my thought.
 Procles—Eurydice—Wilt thou not speak,
 To save my shame ? Say, tell me what thou know'st
 Of that bad woman.

Leon. With such watchful care
 The tyrant's trusted spies observe her steps,
 That, till this fatal evening, when, by order
 Of Procles, I inform'd her of your death,
 I have not seen her once.

Per. Just what I fear'd.
 That guilty secrecy was well contriv'd
 To cover crimes too foul for honest eyes,
 And heaven's fair light to see. None, none but Procles
 Could gain admittance ; and to him my gates,
 My fortress, nay, my bed itself was open !

Leon. Oh, wrong her not, my Lord ! Had you but seen
 With what convulsive pangs of heart-felt anguish,
 What bleeding agonies, she heard the tale
 Of your imagin'd death, your foul wold melt,
 In pity of her woes. This Procles too,
 Call'd down each power of heaven to witness for him,
 He meant her fair. Hers was the common cause
 Of kings, he said, whose place and honour bound them
 To scourge rebellion, in whatever shape,
 Wherever found. And then what was her state ?
 Death, in his ghastliest form, devouring famine,
 Hung instant o'er her head. Oh, think of this,
 And add not to her wrongs !

Per. Ha ! wrong her, say'st thou ?
 Answer me : has she not entail'd disgrace,
 And vileness on my name ? Has she not made me
 The laughter of my foe, the scoff of Procles ?
 Oh, curse ! is there in all the wrath of heaven
 A plague, a ruin, like that infamy !
 • Wrong her—I am too well inform'd of all ;
 • Too certain of the blushing stain that cleaves
 • To me and mine for ever !'

Leon. Ah, my Lord,
 By all good powers, by your eternal quiet,
 I beg you hear me—

Per. I have heard too much,
 Too much, just gods ! to hope for quiet more.
 Those fates inexorable, that pursue
 My life with utmost rigor, would not spare me
 The knowledge of my shame. From my best friend
 Blushing I learnt it—But hast thou e'er felt
 That heart of anguish stabb'd by murderous fears,
 And shuddering with ten thousand mortal thoughts !
 That tempest of the soul that knows no calm ;
 Tossing from love to hate, from doubt to rage,
 To raving agony !

Leon. Alas ! my Lord,
 Trust me, I weep to hear so sad a tale.

Per. I'll tell thee all ! for, Oh ! my soul is full,
 And must have vent. ' My aking memory,
 ' Still fruitful to my torture, brings again
 ' Those days, those months of horror I have known.
 ' Abandon'd to distraction, I renounc'd
 ' The commerce of mankind. I sought to vent
 ' My ravings in the wildness of the woods ;
 ' To hide my shame in their profoundest night.
 ' The morn still brought it back : the midnight-shade
 ' Could not conceal it. Her lone echoes groan'd
 ' Unceasing with my pangs ; and her sad ghosts,
 ' Forbid to rest even in the grave, in me
 ' Beheld a soul more lost, more curst, than they.'

' *Leon.* Oh, Sir, no more—

' *Per.* When I call'd back past time,
 Life's vernal season, the soft hours of peace
 And unsuspecting love ; our growing joys

In rearing one lov'd son ; that heaven of bliss
 Which princes seldom find, and was all ours,
 My soul dy'd in me. ‘ Solitary, wild,
 ‘ I wept, I groan'd, in bitterness of heart.
 ‘ But when curst Procles flash'd on my remembrance,
 ‘ My known, my deadly foe — that he of all,
 ‘ That he had made her vile ! ’twas then, ’tis now
 ‘ Rage, fury, madness.’—You at last arrousd it
 To thoughts of vengeance. With all speed I sail'd,
 Feeding my frenzy with the gloomy joy
 Of stabbing the betrayer in her arms ;
 Of plunging both to hell—but this curst storm !
 These treacherous waves !

Leon. Ye gods, what have I heard !
 Alas, alas ! all waves, all storms, are calms
 To jealousy. Oh, my lov'd Lord, beware
 Of that destroyer, that self-torturing fiend,
 Who loves his pain, and feeds the cruel cares
 That prey upon his life ; whose frantic eye
 Is ever open, ever prying round
 For what he dreads to find. ‘ By all most dear
 ‘ And inward to my soul, I think the Queen
 ‘ As pure as Truth herself.’ This is, by heaven,
 Some dark-laid treachery, the crime of Procles.

Per. Of Procles, say'st thou ?

Leon. Oh, you know him not.

Lust and ambition are not all his guilt.
 But now's no time, my Lord,
 For farther talk. I tremble for your life.
 This place is hostile ground ; and danger here
 May find us out, though shrouded round with night.
 Hence let us fly, where I may lodge you safe
 In some obscure retreat ; till pitying heaven
 Unravel this perplexity of ills,
 And point us what to do.

Per. Thou good old man !

By heaven, thy matchless honesty and truth
 Half reconcile me to disgrace and ruin.
 Yet blushing let me tell thee all my folly —
 Might I but see Eurydice.—Nay, start not :
 I know 'tis base. I know she is beneath
 My coolest scorn. I hate and curse this weakness.

Yet

Yet let me see her—If she still has kept
 Her faith inviolate ; fallen as I am,
 My ruin will be light. If otherwise,
 To know the worst will be soft soothing ease
 To this hot hell of doubt.

Leon. I wish you, Sir,
 To weigh the certain peril that attends
 This rash adventure. Should, which Heav'n avert,
 Should Procles' guards discover you, Oh, think
 What must ensue ! Think, in your fate, the Queen
 And Prince both ruin'd !

Per. But my genius prompts.
 Fate calls ; and I must on. No face of danger
 Can be so dreadful as the vultur-thoughts
 That gnaw my heart-strings. But we both are safe.
 The moon withdraws her light : and who will dream
 Of finding Periander in this ruffet ?
 This, when the storm grew big, I threw around me ;
 In hopes my vulgar fate, if then I perish'd,
 Might ever rest unknown ; and Procles still
 Sit trembling on his throne—But hark, what sounds ?

Leon. The tyrant thus dishonours fortune's favour
 By this mean pomp and triumph—Yet 'tis well.
 Now riot rules the hour, and watchful order
 Resigns his post to dissolute security.
 We now may pass unquestion'd. Come, my Lord,
 This way our path lies. May some friendly god
 Walk with us, and throw tenfold darkness round. [Exe.

Enter Eurydice alone.

Eur. Oh, night of ruin, horror, and despair !
 Walks there beneath thy universal shade
 A wretch like me undone ? All-ruling gods !
 Why have I liv'd to this ? Why was my crime
 Visited on the guiltless head ? on him
 For whom my soul would have met death with joy ?
 Where shall I turn my eyes ? What hope remains
 To misery like mine ? Oh ! I am lost
 Beyond the hand of Heav'n to save me now.
 Leonidas returns not —

Enter Melissa.

Mel. Gracious gods,
 Defend my royal mistress ! As I watch'd
 Without for good Leonidas, this moment

I saw the tyrant cross the lower court,
 Preceded by his minion : as new risen
 From the mad midnight's feast ; his wanton robe
 Loose-flowing from behind, and on his head
 A festal wreath of roses—Ah ! he's here.

Enter Procles and Medon.

Proc. Hail, young ey'd god of wine ! parent of joys !
 Frolic, and full of thee (while the cold sons
 Of temperance, the fools of thought and care,
 Lie stretch'd in sober slumbers) we, the few
 Of purer flame, exalt each living hour
 With pleasures ever new.—Eurydice !
 Thou queen of souls ! thou rapture of my vows !
 What means this pensive mood ? Oh, quench not thus
 In fruitless tears those eyes, that wont to smile
 With all love's sweetness, all his dewy beams,
 Diffusing life around thee.

Eur. Hence, thou tyrant,
 And leave me to my sorrows. Ills like mine
 Would draw remorse and reverence from the savage,
 Who howls with midnight wolves amid the desert
 In quest of horrid prey. What then art thou ?
 Whose brutal rage adds bitterness to woe,
 And anguish to the breaking heart ?

‘ *Proc.* ’Tis well.

- ‘ Yet have a care : my temper but ill brooks
- ‘ Upbraiding now. Be wise, and timely seize
- ‘ The minute of good fortune, that by me
- ‘ Invites thee to be blest.
- ‘ *Eur.* Talk’st thou of bliss ?
- ‘ Thou bane of all my happiness ! Cast back,
- ‘ Cast back thy guilty eyes, and view the crimes
- ‘ Thy soul stands charg’d with : view my bleeding wrongs,
- ‘ Insult, imprisonment, dishonour, ruin !
- ‘ All, all this guilt is thine—but Heaven will find thee.
- ‘ Those gods whom thou hast proudly set at nought,
- ‘ Will call thee to a dreadful reckoning.

‘ *Proc.* No.

- ‘ The gods and I are friends : they crown my cause
- ‘ With their best favour. Come, be thou too mine,
- ‘ And imitate the great example set thee.

‘ *Eur.*

' Eur. Thou vain and blind in soul ! The righteous
 ' Oft, in their anger, cloath the worst of men [gods,
 ' With all the pride of fond prosperity,
 ' To make his fall more terrible.'

Proc. ' Confusion !'

Still wayward and perverse !—Off then this tameness,
 These supple, fawning arts. By all th' impatience
 That goads my soul, I will not flatter more.
 Know thou art in my power, and ——

Eur. Tyrant, no.

I scorn thy base, unmanly threats—Ah, Heaven !
 Dost thou look calmly on ?—But be it so.
 This friendly dagger sets me free.

[Attempting to stab herself.

Proc. Ha ! what,
 What means thy frantic passion ? This is wildness,
 Th' extravagance of female wilfulness ;
 It must not be ; you shall be gently forc'd
 To live, and to be happy.

Enter an Officer.

Off. Sir, forgive
 This rude intrusion. What I bring imports
 Your present ear. As now I walk'd the round
 Of this wide fort, where the steep-winding path
 Ends at the northern gate, I spy'd a stranger,
 Who sought to lie conceal'd. Forthwith I rous'd
 The nearest watch ; and, ere he was aware,
 Surrounded him at once. His fullen silence,
 And hands oft rais'd to heaven with earnest action,
 Convince me he is of no common note.

Eur. My soul ! what dost thou hear ?

[Aside.]

Proc. 'Tis well. I thank thee.

Haste, see him brought before us.

Enter Periander guarded.

Eur. Oh, ye powers !

[Aside.]

Per. Ha ! poison to my eyes !

[Aside.]

Proc. I know him not.

His dress is poor, and speaks him of the vulgar.
 He seems to labour with some stormy thought,
 That deeply shakes his frame. What art thou ? say,
 Why at this hour of silence ling'ring here ?

C

Ha !

Ha! speak, resolve me; or the rack shall tear
Confession from thy pangs.

Per. Fate, thou hast caught me!
But all is equal now.

[*Aside.*

[*To him.*] Then see before thee
The man on earth whom thou hast injur'd most.
If guilt can know remorse, what must thou feel
At sight of Periander?

Proc. Periander!

Eur. Now, now, we both are ruin'd.

Proc. Heaven, I thank thee.

I form'd but one supreme, one crowning wish,
And thou hast heard it! This is more than triumph!

Eur. Oh, my lov'd Lord—

Per. Thou canst no more betray me.
For thee, my soul still unsubdu'd and free,
Disdains to parle with thine.

Proc. Yet thou art fallen

Beneath my wrath, the vassal of my nod,
To be chastis'd for mirth—Guards, drag him hence,
And plunge him in the dungeon's depth.

Eur. Oh, heav'n!

Per. Away,

Unkingly boaster. Can prosperity
Debase thee to the cowardice of insult?
Thy brutal manners well revenge me on thee:
They shew thee as thou art—‘ My nobler part,
‘ Th’ immortal mind, thy madnes cannot reach :
‘ Thy whips and racks can there impress no wound.’
As for this weary carcass in thy power,
It is beneath my care. Lead to my dungeon.
Chains, scourges, torture, all that nature feels,
Or fears abhorrent, cannot shock my thought
Like thy loath’d sight, and that vile woman’s. On.

[*Exit guarded.*

Eur. My Lord, my husband, stay—Oh, hear me!
hear me—

Shame! rage! distraction!—Cruel tyrant, off.
I’ll follow him to death.

Proc. No. By the joys
That swell my soaring thought, you shall not 'scape me,

Revenge and love combine to crown this night
With matchless bliss.

Eur. Inhuman ! hast thou eyes ?
Hast thou a heart ? and cannot all this wreck
Of ruin'd majesty, ruin'd by thee,
Move one relenting thought, and wake thy pity ?
He feels not what I say : repeated crimes
Have savag'd his remorseless soul.—Hear then,
Almighty Jove ! behold, and judge the cause
Of Periander ! number all his wrongs
In plagues, in horrors—

Proc. Ha ! by hell, this raving
But wings his fate. Since thy fond folly weds thee
To ruin with this rival, know he dies ;
This very night he dies. Through him I mean
To wound thy heart indeed. Thou shalt behold him
When the rack stretches strong his rending joints,
Bursts all his veins, and hunts the flying soul
Through every limb. Then, when convulsive agony
Grins hideous in his face, mangled and bleeding,
In the last throes of death, thou shalt behold him.

Eur. It is not to be borne ! My life dies in me
At the destroying thought—Ah, stay thee, Procles—
Assist me, pitying Heaven !—See then, behold me
Thus prostrate at thy feet. If yet thou hast not
Renounc'd all manhood, feeling, and remorse,
‘ Spare me his life ; save only that : all else,
His crown, his throne be thine.

‘ *Proc.* Off ! let me go :
Thy words are lost in air.

‘ *Eur.* Nay, hear me, Procles.
‘ As is thy hope in Heaven’s forgiving goodness,
‘ Shut not thy heart against the cry of misery.’
Banish us any whither ; drive us out
To shame, want, beggary, to every woe
That most embitters life—I yet will blefs thee,
Forget my crying wrongs, and own thee merciful.

Procles aside, and pausing.
This woman fools my rage—but to resolve.
No—yes ; it shall be so. Rise then, and learn
Thy triumph o’er my soul. Yes, he shall live,
This Periander whom I deadly hate.

Nay more, he shall be free. Leonidas,
 With such safe conduct as thyself shalt name,
 Attends him to our kingdom's farthest limit.
 This, in the sight of Jove the supreme lord,
 I swear to do; so thou at last consent
 To meet my love—Ha! what! and dost thou frown?
 Weigh well what I propose; for on my soul,
 His life or death awaits thy next resolve.

[*Exeunt Procles and Medon.*

Eur. Then kill me first—He's gone! and now, ye gods,
 Is there among the wretched one so lost,
 So curst as I? Oh, scene of matchless woes!
 Oh, Periander! wert thou sav'd for this?
 Ye holy powers in heaven, to whom belongs
 The fate of virtue, and redress of wrongs,
 Assist, inspire me how to save his life;
 Or to th' unhappy husband join the wife. [*Exeunt.*

END of the SECOND ACT.

A C T III.

Eurydice and Melissa.

MELISSA.

THIS cheerless morning rises slow and sad.
 The frowning heavens are black with stormy clouds;
 And, o'er the deep, a hovering night of fogs
 Lies dark and motionless.

Eur. That mournful face
 Of Nature is less gloomy than my soul:
 All there is darkness and dismay. Ah, me!
 Was ever night, Melissa, like the last?
 A night of many terrors, many deaths!
 How has my soul out-liv'd it? But, great gods!
 Can mortal strength, can human virtue bear
 What Periander feels? In one day's course,
 Wreck'd, made a captive, sunk into a dungeon,
 To die or live as his curst foe decrees!

Distraction's in the thought. And what can I
 To save his sacred life?

Ha! is it Heaven [*After a pause.*
 That darts this sudden light into my soul?

This

This glimpse of dawning hope?—It shall be try'd.
Yes, yes, ye powers! my life and fame shall both
Be offer'd up to save his dearer life.

Mel. Alas, what mean you, Madam?

Eur. Mean, Melissa!

To do a noble justice on myself;
A deed for which, in nations yet unborn,
Chaste wives and matrons shall renown my name.
I've wrong'd my husband greatly, and I mean
Ample atonement of my guilty weakness.

Go then, Melissa—

Mel. Whither must I go?

I tremble at your words.

Eur. Yet it sticks here,
This fatal purpose. Can I leave behind me
A doubtful name, insulted, wounded, torn
By cruel calumny? I can; I dare
‘ Throw off the woman, and be deaf to all
‘ Those nicer female fears that call so loud,
‘ Importunate, and urging me to live
‘ Till I may clear my truth from all surmise.’
Go then, and in my name—’Tis worse than death
To utter it—but go, inform the tyrant,
So Periander lives, and is set free,
I yield me to his wish.

Mel. Forbid it, Heaven!

Eur. Thou faithful, virtuous maid! Know then, my last,
My fix'd resolve. By this I mean to amuse
His brutal hopes, and save me from his violence,
Till Periander is beyond his reach.
Then, if he still dare urge his impious purpose,
A dagger sets me free. This arm at last
Shall do me right on him, myself, or both.

Enter Leonidas.

Eur. Leonidas!

Leon. Ah, Madam!

Eur. Dare I ask

Where Periander is—Ah, where indeed?
Chain'd in a dungeon's airless depth, amid
Foul damps, and lonesome darkness! Oh, that thought
Draws blood from my torn heart.

Leon. Justice divine!

In thy great day of visitation, mark
 This man of blood. Oh, let him feel the hand
 He dares to disbelieve. To all his counsels
 Send forth, in thy just wrath, that fatal spirit
 Of error and illusion, that foreruns
 The fall of guilty kings.

Ere morning dawn,
 Soft to the dismal dungeon's mouth I stole,
 Where, by the glimmerings of a dying lamp,
 I saw my great unhappy master laid
 On the cold earth along —

Eur. Oh, hide the sad,
 The fatal image from me. ‘The dire thought
 Will run me into madness.

‘*Leon.* Yet even there,
 Where pale dismay, the prisoner’s drear associate,
 Sits ever sad and sleepless, he could rest.
 Superior to the cruel fate that crush’d him,
 He slept as deep as indolence on down.
 These eyes beheld it ; and I would not break
 His wish’d repose, but fix’d in silent wonder,
 Stood weeping o’er the sight.’

‘*Eur.* Ah, me ! my life
 Flows out at every word — What’s to be done ?

Leon. Madam, I set my all at stake for him.
 Old as I am, and broken with the load
 Of threescore years, what is a life like mine,
 But as it may be useful to my master ?
 Already the sad people know his fate :
 And I, by faithful hands, will try to rouse
 Their pity first, and next their rage. No hour,
 No moment shall be lost.

Eur. Thou good old man !
 What words can speak thy worth ? Fair loyalty
 And faith inviolate, which seem’d quite lost
 Among mankind, live in thy virtuous bosom.

Leon. No more of this, my Queen. Might I but see
 This haughty tyrant, in some guilty hour
 Of insolence and riot, when his pride
 Plumes all her vainest wishes, hurl’d at once
 To ruin unforeseen ; my labours then,
 My services, were greatly over-paid.

Eur. Heaven hear thy pious wish. I too the while,
To save my husband's life, have been contriving—

Leon. Madam, the tyrant—I will find another
More favourable moment. [*Exeunt Eur. and Mel.*

Enter Procles and Medon.

Proc. Hold thyself
Prepar'd, Leonidas : I must employ thee
In an affair of weight. [*Leonidas withdraws.*
Methinks I droop
With more than wonted heaviness of heart.
But I will shake it off, and to the winds
Give every thought of care. 'Tis only fondness,
And fancy sick with hope. Eurydice
Bends to my wishes : and, in her, I hope
That heaven imagin'd that sole bliss, which yet
My search could never meet.

Med. It moves my wonder
To see your love thus wedded to one bosom :
While all around bright crouds of rival beauties
Practise each art of charming, look, and talk,
And live for you alone.

Proc. Alas, my friend !
Poor is the triumph over hearts like these :
This hour they please us, and the next they pall.
But to subdue the pride that scorns to yield ;
To fill th' unwilling breast with sighs and longings,
With all the soft distraction of fond love,
Even while it strives against th' invading victor,
And wonders at the change ; that, that is conquest !
The plume of pleasure ! and from her alone
A glory to be won.

Med. Well, may you find
In this proud fair-one that enchant's you thus,
Whate'er imagination's fondest eye
Beholds in rapturous vision, or young love
In all his wantonness of power can give.
But yet, forgive your servant's forward zeal,
Mean you to keep the promise you have made her ?

Proc. I do.

Med. How, Sir ! what set her husband free ?

Proc. I mean no less.

Med. Your pardon, Sir : 'tis well.

But have you calmly weigh'd, in reason's scale,
 The certain consequence? Set free your rival!
 A foul made furious with his mighty wrongs;
 Boiling with hate, rage, jealousy, revenge;
 With the full-gather'd storm of deadly passions!
 The gods forbid it, Sir——And all to dry
 A foward woman's tears!

Proc. No, no, my friend;
 Nor liberty nor life shall long be his:
 I never meant him either; but my faith
 Is pass'd to set him free. By that alone
 The haughty Queen was overcome; and I
 Will keep th' illusive promise to her ear,
 But break it to her hope.

Med. As how, my Lord?

Proc. Such inbred enmity my soul bears his
 As Nature does to ruin, to the grave,
 Where the whole man descends to rise no more.
 Hear then what I intend. Thou know'st the fortress,
 That guards our frontier on the Theban side.
 That way our foe must pass; but thou shalt first
 Post thither on the spur with wary speed:
 And with a chosen band, drawn from the fort,
 Way-lay him on the farther hill, close couch'd
 In the deep covert of those pendant woods,
 That shade the path below.

Med. Conclude it done.

Sleep shall not know my eyes, till his are clos'd
 In everlasting night. As to his prison
 I waited him, he call'd me minion, slave,
 A traitor's parasite, the base-foul'd minister
 Of his loose pleasures; and I will repay him,
 For each opprobrious name, a mortal stab.
 Yes, he shall feel his fate. Insult and taunt,
 Embittering every blow, shall mock his pangs,
 And give him sevenfold death.

Proc. So, now to try
 This Periander thoroughly. Go, Medon,
 Command him hither. [Exit Medon.
 No, I cannot bear
 His last night's haughty look and untam'd spirit.
 It baffles my revenge, and I still miss

My noblest triumph; for I meant to bend him
 To base dejection, and to feast my scorn
 With his pale cheek and supplicating eye.
 But I will hunt this pride through each recess,
 Each closer folding of the soul, till I
 Have sunk him to my wish.—Thou, jealousy!
 Almighty tyrant of the human mind,
 Who canst at will unsettle the calm brain,
 O'erturn the seated heart, and shake the man
 Through all his frame with tempest and distraction;
 Rise to my present aid; call up thy powers,
 Thy furious fears, thy blasts of dreadful passion,
 Thy whips, snakes, mortal stings, thy host of horrors;
 Rouse thy whole war against him, and complete
 My purpos'd vengeance.—But he comes to prove it.

Enter Periander, Medon, and Guards.

[Advancing.] I have to talk with thee. Thy life, thou
 Depends upon my will— [know'st,

Per. And therefore I

Am weary of the load. But let the gods,
 Who thus dispense our fates, account for them,
 And vindicate their justice.

Proc. Be more calm.

The noble mind meets every chance of fortune,
 Unruffled and serene. I, though thy foe,
 Perhaps may mean thee good.

Per. Such good the tiger,
 Hungry for death and slaughter, means his prey.
 But know, my soul receives with equal scorn
 Thy hate and hollow love. I am not fallen
 By thy superior sword, or nobler deed;
 It was the guilt of fate!

Proc. Call we it so.

At least 'tis well thou must of force acknowledge
 Thy crown, thy liberty, thy life and death,
 Hang on my nod. I can dispose of all
 As likes me best.

Per. Ha! dost thou boast of that?
 But thou wilt never know how poor a purchase
 Is power and empire gain'd for virtue lost.

Proc. And yet, methinks, I read the difference plain
 In thee and me. Thy virtue and these bonds

I weigh.

I weigh in equal scale against the crown
 And sceptre of fair Corinth : and while these,
 The glorious aim of each great heart that dares
 Beyond the narrow sphere of earth-born spirits ;
 While these are mine, I envy not thy tribe,
 A found, an empty name.

Per. It joys my soul
 To find the man, who bears me mortal hate,
 At war too with the gods. 'Tis great revenge !
 Had not vain fortune made thee blind, the thought
 Would change thy purple to the mourner's sack-cloth.
 What are thy glorious acts ?—Thou hast undone
 A woman, weak and worthless.—Yes, ye powers !
 This hero, this fair warrior, well deserv'd
 To fill my vacant seat: he won it nobly !
 Dissembling, perjury, the coward's arms—
 With these he fought his virtuous way to empire.
 Thou seest I know thee.

' *Proc.* Dost thou preach to me
 ' The pedant maxims of those sons of earth,
 ' Whom the gross vulgar fondly title wise ?
 ' Slaves, who to shades and solitude condemn'd,
 ' Pine there with all-shunn'd penury and scorn.
 ' A monarch is above them, and takes counsel
 ' Of his unbounded will, and high ambition,
 ' That counts the world his own. I ever held thee
 ' My foe, my deadly bane ; and against such,
 ' Force, fraud, all arts, are lawful. I have won
 ' And mean to wear thy crown. Thou may'st the while
 ' Seek some vile cell out, and grow poorly old
 ' Amid the talking tribe of moralists.

' *Per.* Through this false face of arrogance, I read
 ' Thy heart of real terror and dismay.
 ' Hence all these coward-boasts. The truly brave,
 ' Invincible to pride and fortune's flattery,
 ' Know neither fear nor insult.—But I would not,
 ' As thou surmisest, dream out useless life
 ' In sloth's unactive couch. Nay, I could tell thee,
 ' That though I shun thy shameful ways of conquest ;
 ' Still heaven-born glory, won by virtuous deeds,
 ' Has been my fair pursuit : still would I seek her

‘ In toils of war, and in the nobler field
 ‘ Of justice, peace, and mercy.’

Proc. My soul longs
 To prove thy highest daring, and to meet thee
 Amid the din and peril of the battle.
 Thy life is in thy hand : thou art no longer
 Our prisoner. This moment sets thee free.

Per. How !—but thou dar’st not—Could I find thee
 In open day, and honourable arms, [there,
 Opposing war to war, as monarchs should,
 I would forgive thee all, my crown usurp’d,
 These slave-like bonds—But that fair hope is vain.
 The fears that haunt thy soul—

Proc. Strike off his fetters. [To Medon.
 Haste, find Leonidas. Bid him prepare
 To guard the prisoner to our kingdom’s frontier.
 There he shall leave him free to chuse what course
 His fancy most affects.

Per. What means all this ?
 Dares guilt then be so brave ? and dost thou free
 The man whom act of thine shall never win
 To owe thee aught but deep and deadly hate ?

Proc. Go, see my orders instantly perform’d.

[Medon and Guards retire.

‘ *Per.* And is it so—I shudder with my fears. [Aside.
 ‘ Say, tell me first to what is Periander
 ‘ Indebted for this freedom ?’

Proc. Well it may
 Surprize thy hope : ’twas what I never meant thee,
 But that fond woman who enslaves my soul
 To all her wishes, and still pitys thee,
 With idle blandishments extorted from me
 A solemn vow to set thee free.

Per. Confusion !
Proc. Thus I, against my better mind, release
 My mortal enemy. But let it speak
 The greatness of my love ; and what dull husband,
 Through all recorded time, e’er gave such proof
 Of matchless fondness ?

Per. Plagues ! perdition ! hell !
 Damn’d, damn’d adulteress !—Villain, slave, ’tis false :
 Thou ly’st — What thee ! Oh, curse —

Proc. At last ’tis done.

[Exit.
Per.

Per. Have I then liv'd to this? to this confusion?
 My foe, the man on earth my soul most loaths,
 Rejoices over me; and she---even she
 Hath join'd his triumph!---Off, away, begone,
 Love, manhood, reason—Come, ye sister-furies,
 Daughters of hate and hell! arise, inflame
 My murderous purpose; pour into my veins
 Your gall, your scorpion-fellness, your keen horrors
 That sting to madness; till my burning vengeance
 Hath her full draught of blood—

[Walking with a disturbed motion.]

But how! where am I?

Oh, this poor brain! ten thousand shapes of fury
 Are whirling there, and reason is no more.

Him! him! a caitif black with every vice!

Debase herself to him!—the thought is hell!

Well, well—and I, how have I doated on her

Whole years of fondness! cherish'd, pleas'd, adorn'd her
 With all that love can give—Yet she has done this!

Confusion on my folly—Ha! she comes.

Down, down, tempestuous soul: let me be dumb,
 And hide this shameful conflict that unmans me.

Enter Eurydice.

Eur. He must not know my secret fatal purpose,
 That I am fix'd to die; lest his great soul
 Refuse a life so dearly sav'd—And now,
 All powers that pity human kind, assist me
 In this important hour!

Oh, Periander—

And is it thus we meet again!

Per. Ha! see,
 She comes prepar'd. By hell, she weeps a lie.
 My rage will leap all bounds.

[Afide.
[To him.]

[Afide.]

Eur. My Lord, my love,
 I know you look on me as on the cause,
 The fatal cause of all your ills; too true:
 That guilt is mine—Oh, would to heaven, this head
 Had been laid low in earth ere that sad hour!
 Why did I shrink at ruin? Why not bear
 All pangs, all horrors of besieging famine?
 Alas! my love—But your false faithless subjects,
 To what have they reduc'd us?

Per.

Per. No; not they:

Betrayer! thou alone hast made me wretched.
Oh, death to a king's honour! thou hast funk me
Into a proverb of reproach; a word
For low contempt, for ribald scorn to mock at,

' *Eur.* Just gods! what means my Lord?

' *Per.* Mean!—dost thou ask?

' *Eur.* Heaven! has the traitor then——

' *Per.* Ha! does that gaul thee?

' Perdition!—Woman! Woman!—Yes, thy minion,
The vile one, has repaid thy broken oath
With well-match'd perjury: has loudly boasted
To heaven, and earth, and me, that thou art—Hell!
The hated word would choak me!

Eur. Oh, dire error!

My Lord, my only love, by holy faith [Aside.
I never was disloyal. Rags and penury,
Disease and death, shock not my apprehension
Like that detested crime — I dare no more.
Oh, fly, my love; haste from this fatal place,
And leave me to my fate. Oh, save your life,
While yet 'tis in your power. [To him.

Per. My life! Away.

And hast thou vilely barter'd for that life
Thy truth, and my fair fame? By yon blest heaven,
I could have borne all woes that wretchedness
Groans under; age, affliction, pining anguish:
And borne them like a man. I could have smil'd
At fortune's keenest rancor — But to know
Myself deceiv'd in thee! there, there I sink!
There manhood, reason die.

Eur. Oh, ye just powers!

Were ever woes like mine? What are the whips,
Rack, engines, all that murderous cruelty
Hath yet contriv'd — What are they all to this?
This infamy that kills the soul itself?
Yet I will bear even this.
Then here, by weeping, bleeding love I beg you,
With streaming eyes, haste from this fatal place.
The tyrant may recall his word; and then —
I cannot utter more.

Per. And thou canst weep!

D

Thou

Thou crocodile ! These false, these lying tears
 Are daggers here. I go—but dost thou hope
 Thy mean dissimulation hides thee from me ?
 Thou hast dishonour'd, ruin'd me ; and now
 My sight is hateful to thee.

But say, tell me,

[*Returning.*]

How have I merited these wrongs of thee ?
 What was my crime ? Can all-bestowing love
 Do more than mine for thee ?—When I call back
 The days that are no more—Thou wert my all
 Of happiness ; my soul ne'er knew a joy
 That was not thine ; my doating fondness lull'd
 Its hopes, its fears, its wishes, in thy bosom.
 O heaven and earth !—and yet—Eurydice—
 Thou could'st forsake me !

[*Weeps.*]

Eur. Oh, this is too much !

Heaven knows, I would have dy'd to save thy life :
 But we will perish both, both die together.
 Thy tears distract me. I will tell thee all.

Per. Curse on this weakness ! I could tear these eyes
 From forth their orbs—Thou exquisite deceiver !
 Hence, lest this arm should do a deed of shame,
 And stain me with thy blood.

Eur. Oh, but one moment !

For mercy's sake, allow me one short moment.

Per. No ; in the sight of all-beholding Jove,
 Here I renounce thee. What a slave to folly,
 To thy curs'd arts has Periander liv'd !

Eur. Oh, cruel, cruel ! hast thou cast me out,
 For ever from thy heart ? By all our loves,
 By the dear pledge of our unspotted flames,
 Grant me one moment.

[*Kneels.*]

Here will I hang, grow to thy knees—Yes, spurn me,
 Drag this bare bleeding bosom on the ground ;
 Yes, use me as the vilest slave—but hear me.

Per. Away, away.

Eur. Then strike me dead at once.

Look here, my love ; I shrink not from the blow.

Per. That were poor vengeance. No, I meditate
 A nobler sacrifice—

[*Alarm of Trumpets.*]

Ha ! what's this ?

[*Alarm again.*]

Th' alarm

Th' alarm is urgent, big with war and dread.
I am the sport of fortune.

Enter Melissa.

Mel. Oh, my Lord,
Some wonderous birth of fate is sure disclosing !
Procles calls out to arms ; his guards swarm round him,
Haste in each step, and fear in every eye.
This way too Medon speeds, and in his train
A gloomy band of soldiers.

Per. Let him come.
Death has no terrors, when to live is shame.

Enter Medon at the head of one party, who hurry the Queen off the Stage ; Leonidas at the head of another, who remove the King.

Med. Be quick, secure the Queen.

Eur. What mean'st thou, ruffian ?
Must we then part ?—Farewel, my Lord, for ever.

Per. Thou too, Leonidas ! — Nay, then —

[*Exeunt all but Leonidas.*]

Leon. O, Jove !

Eternal and supreme, whose nod controuls
The fate of empires, whose almighty hand
Sustains the weak, and raises virtue fallen,
Now to this royal sufferer deal thy mercy ;
Aid his just arms, and teach mankind to know,
Thy sovereign justice sways the world below.

[*Exit.*]

END of the THIRD ACT.

A C T IV.

Enter Eurydice and Melissa.

EURYDICE.

WHAT may this mean ? The gloomy band of ruffians,
That bore me hence, vanish'd I know not how.
And hark ! no sound, no breath of human voice ;
But all around the depth of solitude !
A dumb and death-like stillness ! My soul trembles ;
And apprehension peoples the lone void,
With fears of horrid form — But what can fate ?

What can the wrath of all the gods inflict,
Beyond what I have known?

Mel. My gracious mistress,
This awful moment is perhaps the crisis
Of all your future life. Your guards fled sudden,
And late the neighbouring courts were loud with tumult,
Which dy'd away in flow and sulken murmurs.
Some turn of fate is near. *Leonidas*
In haste bore hence the King, doubtless to save him
From his dire foe; or at the people's head
Once more to place their sovereign, and restore
You to your former state.

Eur. All otherwise
My thoughts forebode. There is one deadly ill,
Which, Oh, too sure, no time, no chance can heal!
And at the dawn of day, just as these lids
Reluctant clos'd to rest, A-pafia's shade,
My much-lov'd mother, stood confess'd before me,
Pale as the shroud that wound her clay-cold limbs;
Her eyes fix'd on me, still and motionless,
Streaming unreal tears. She groan'd, and thrice,
In low sad murmurs, bade me to her tomb,
To meet her there—And there, in death alone,
In the dark grave, can poor Eurydice
Expect repose.

Mel. Oh, no! just Heaven, I hope,
That sees your innocence, has yet in store
Much bliss, and many days of peace for you.

Eur. I know his heart is quite estrang'd, and shut,
For ever shut against the voice of love.
And can my heart survive it? Shall I live
With public infamy? A theme of scorn
To all licentious tongues? Oh, in that thought,
Death's keenest dart has stabb'd my soul already!
And what comes after is not worth my fear.

Mel. Ha! Madam, this way cast your eyes, and see
What swarms of men; these flying, those pursuing.

Eur. Now, Lord of battles! join thy powerful arm;
Assert the cause of righteousness — But hark!
The thunder of their shouts grows near and loud.
This way the combat turns. By all my hopes,

The tyrant's party flies ! Look, look, Melissa,
Their broken numbers to the fortress bend.

Mel. And now with eager speed they climb th' ascent
That leads to us.

Eur. But who is he, Melissa,
That, like the God of War, flames foremost yonder ?
See his sword lighten, and the foe fly scattering
From his tempestuous arm ! — Ha ! — yes — Oh, Heaven !
'Tis he, 'tis he himself, 'tis Periander !
Oh, miracle ! — He looks again a monarch,
Dreadfully glorious. Throw, all ye Powers, your shield
Of providence before him ; think on all
His causeless wrongs, and do him justice now.

Mel. Ah ! Procles comes.

Enter Procles, followed by a party of his Guards.

Proc. Confusion ! all is lost.

That traitor has undone me ; and those slaves,
The false Corinthians, in a moment's flight,
Threw all their gates wide open to the foe.
Of hope abandon'd, and the gods against me,
What now remains ? — The Queen ! By Heaven, 'tis well !
Their boasted triumph is not yet compleat —
She's mine, she's mine, and I am conqueror still ! —
You, bear this woman thro' the postern gate,

[To one party.

Down to the southern shore. I sail this moment
For Epidaurus — You, the while, make head [To another.
Against the near pursuit, ' and bar its progress,
' Till she's secur'd. This is my last great stake ;
' Of dearer price than victory.' Away.

Eur. No, tyrant ; I will die first. Off, base slaves.
Dare ye, dare earth-born peasants violate,
With your rude touch, the majesty of kings ?
Ah, Heaven —

Proc. Be quick ; nor listen to her raving.

Enter Medon.

Med. Undone, undone ! the postern gate is seiz'd.
That curs'd Leonidas —

Proc. Ha ! say'lt thou, Medon ?

Med. By hell, our foes surround us on each hand :
We're taken in the toil.

Proc. Unequal Powers !

And have you then deceiv'd me? Rais'd me high
 With traitorous kindness, but to plunge me deeper
 In howling desperation? ' Does the man,
 ' Whom late my foot could spurn, behold my fall?
 ' And fall I thus; my great ambition dash'd;
 ' My love unsatisfy'd? Shall he yet revel
 ' In her fond arms, and hear her curse my name?
 ' No; spite of Heaven, my ruin shall be glorious,
 ' A pomp of horrors. I will make this day
 ' For ever mournful to his aking heart.
 ' Yes, he shall weep in blood amid the shouts
 ' Of victory.' One blow destroys his triumph,
 And levels him at once to my destruction.

[*He draws a dagger.*

Eur. Strike, tyrant, and complete thy monstrous crimes.
 See, thou pale coward; see, a woman braves
 Thy guilty dagger.

Proc. ' Ha! what's this I feel?
 ' A shivering dew of horror sweats all o'er me!
 Some Power invisible arrests my arm!
 ' It is Heaven's secret hand.'—But shall I lose
 This only moment? No; be strong, my heart;
 Be shut againt all human thoughts, and scorn
 These warrings of thy hostile gods.—'Tis done.

Enter Polydore, Leonidas, and Soldiers; Polydore pushes
Procles back with his Lance.

Pol. No, traitor! murderer! no: Heaven is more just,
 Than to permit a life so much its care
 To fall by thy vile hand. Secure the tyrant.

[*To his Soldiers.*

My mother!

Eur. Oh, my son!

Pol. Transporting joy!

Eur. Oh, ecstasy! And do I see thy face?
 And do I hold thee in my trembling arms?—
 Thou darling of my love! thou early hero!
 Oh, thou hast sav'd us all!

Pol. This, this is triumph!
 And I can ask of bounteous Heaven no more.
 Was ever joy so full? This feeble arm,

Oh,

Oh, pride to think ! has sav'd the sacred lives
From whom I drew my own.

Eur. And is this possible ?

What shall I say ?—But language all is poor
To speak the tender yearnings of my soul.
O Polydore ! did ever parents know
Such transports as do thine ? Did ever son
Deserve so well of parents ?—Good Leonidas,
I saw thee not before ; indeed I could not,
My eyes, my soul were so close fix'd on him.
But say, redouble this day's bliss, and say,
Whence this amazing change ?

Leon. My royal mistress,

The gods have done this. One half of the fleet,
As led by their peculiar hand, escap'd
Yesterday's ruinous storm, and with the dawn
Enter'd the port unseen ; their secret landing
Befriended by the morn's wide-hovering mists.
Instant, inform'd of his great father's fate,
Your Polydore, this gallant, royal youth,
Pour'd forth his eager troops, and at their head,
Swift as heaven's darted fire, flew towards Corinth,
Which open'd wide her arms to take him in.
His fortune speaks the rest.

Eur. O sovereign goodness,
Be thine the praise ; this is thy wond'rous work.
The King, how was he sav'd ?

Leon. Struck with his danger,
The tyrant had to prevent death devoted
His sacred head. I counsell'd, and prevail'd
(Procles still thought me his) in bonds to hold him,
As our sure pledge of safety, should success
Desert our arms. The following moment saw him
Free from his chains, and foremost in the fight—
And hark ! these joyous strains proclaim his triumph.

Eur. Retire, my son ; I would not meet him here.

[*Exeunt Eurydice, Polydore, and Melissa.*

Enter Periander, Ariston, and Attendants.

Per. [Aside.] She flies—Thou coward, Guilt !—But
hence that thought— [Advances towards Proc.
At length the measure of thy crimes is full :
Thy high-plum'd pride lies humbled in the dust ;

And

And awful Justice comes, array'd in terrors,
 To make enquiry for the guilt that swells
 Thy black account. But I will check my heart,
 Nor learn of thee to triumph o'er the fallen.
 Bear him to prison.

Proc. Yet, I will be free,
 And soon beyond thy power. Knowing the worst,
 I laugh at all to come.

Per. [To Med.] For thee, thou vile one,
 Thou pandar to thy master's lusts, thou sycophant,
 (The most pernicious present angry Heaven
 Can make to princes whom it means to blind,
 And ruin beyond mercy) thy just doom
 Is instant. Spurn this slave into the streets.
 The furious people, whom his earth-born pride
 Has trampled on, and numerous rapines beggar'd,
 Will find th' oppressor out, and as they tear
 His guilty limbs, think all their wrongs o'erpaid.

[*Exeunt Procles and Medon guarded.*

Leonidas, my father and preserver,
 Rise to my arms. By heaven, 'the joy that smiles
 'Upon thy brow, adds brightness to the morn !'
 This wonderous revolution of my fate,
 This change, that gives me back my crown and name,
 Rejoices me yet less, than that I owe
 The gift to thee.

Leon. Oh, sacred Sir, forbear !
 The transport to behold you thus again,
 Is great reward. Now your old man can say
 He has not liv'd in vain. Ye bounteous Powers,
 Dismiss me now in peace ; for I have seen
 My master bleis'd !

Per. No recompence can equal
 Such matchless goodness. But I will repay thee
 A way more pleasing to a soul like thine,
 By running still in debt to all thy virtues.
 Thou know'st th' unhappy, envy'd state of kings ;
 How perilous the height so near to heaven :
 All round is precipice ; and on each hand,
 Foremost in place and trust, their deadliest foes,
 Power, passion, pleasure, wait to push them headlong.
 Thy life has roll'd thro' all the various round

Of human chance ; and years of hoary thought,
 Cool and unpassionate, have taught thee wisdom.
 Be still my guide, and save me from the snares
 That thus beset me ; save me from myself.

Leon. My heart can only answer to this goodness
 By silent gratitude and joy — But, Sir,
 Forgive me, if I say, another care
 Demands your present thought.

Per. [Aside.] Fatal remembrance !
 At once inflam'd my smother'd rage burns up
 With fiercer blaze. He must not know the purpose
 With which my bosom labours — Yes, my friend,
 Of that we'll talk anon ; but now I wish
 An hour of privacy. — Ariston, stay. [Exit Leon.
 Thus far have I repress'd the storm within me,
 Held down its furious heavings ; but they now
 Shall have full flow. I am once more a king.
 My foe is in my hand, and breathes this air
 But till I doom him dead ; yet is not he
 So curs'd, so ruin'd as his conqueror !

Arist. What do I hear, my Lord ?

Per. Ah, good Ariston,
 The horrors of thy tale were true ! She has,
 She has betray'd me.

Arist. Since the Queen is fallen,
 There is no trust in woman —

Per. Nor no hope
 For wretched Periander. Not the grave
 Can hide me now from scorn ; not length of days
 Will wear out this. Oh, never-dying shame !
 Worlds yet unfound will hear it ; and where'er
 The guilty tale is told, my fate will raise
 Base mirth, or baser pity.

Arist. Could the Queen
 Stoop to a thought of Procles ? False, fond sex !
 Unfix'd by reason, ever wandering wild,
 As fancy whirls, from folly on to folly,
 From vanity to vice. My gracious Lord,
 She is beneath your anger. Cast her out
 From all your soul, and be yourself again.
 Resume that reason, Sir —

Per. Away ! Can reason

Arrest the whirlwind's wing, or quench the forest,
Struck by the hand of Jove, when all its woods
In one broad conflagration blaze to heaven ?

'Tis reason makes me wretched ; for it tells me
How shameful this mad conflict of my passions :
But does that still their uproar ? Here, Ariston,
Works the wild storm that reason cannot calm.
I must, I will have ease.

Arist. You may ; but, Oh,
The remedy is dreadful, and will give you
Swoonings and mortal agonies ! I tremble
To mention it ; but such your soul's deep malady,
No gentler cure can bring the health you want.
Her death, my Lord.—

Per. Ha ! death—My soul shrinks back
From the dread image. How ! for ever lose her !
My queen, my wife !—Behold those eyes no more,
That were the light of mine ! no longer hear
That voice, whose every sound was harmony !
Of power to sooth tumultuous rage, and heal
The wounded heart of anguish—Can it be !
Oh, misery ! Why, why is this !

Arist. Alas,
You love her still, my Lord, and know it not !

Per. Ye gods, why am I thus driven to and fro
By every blast that blows ?—It is too true.
A traitorous softness steals o'er my just rage,
And melts me to the dotage of low pity.
Oh, thou mean heart ! Is she not false ? And I,
Shall I sit down with tame dishonour ? Take
Pollution to my arms ? Grow vilely old,
A tale for drunkards in their wine ? The mirth
Of midnight libertines, when they recount
Their triumphs o'er base women ? No ! she dies :
I tear her from my breast, tho' the life-stream
Should issue with her. Hear me, then, Ariston,
Do thou prepare a secret draught of death,
Of power most swift and baneful, and be ready
Upon my fatal summons.

Arist. Spare me, Sir ;
I like not this employ.

Per. It must be thine.

I have

I have no friend in whom to trust but thee ;
 And she shall die—But think'st thou, good Ariston,
 I should not hear her first ?

‘ *Arist.* Hear her, my Lord !

‘ Would you then have her live ?

‘ *Per.* No ; were my fate

‘ Involv'd in hers, she should not live. But still,
 Something within me cries that I should hear her.
 It is not, can't be love. ’Tis my revenge,
 All direful now, that would enjoy her tears,
 Her lying oaths of innocence, her new
 And added perjuries ; then sink her down
 To the dark world, with all her crimes upon her.

‘ *Arist.* You see not, Sir, the danger of that meeting.

‘ Is your heart proof against the powerful charm

‘ Of beauty soften'd into sighs, and melting

‘ With the mild languor of imploring eyes,

‘ More winning now, and shedding gentler beams

‘ Thro' showers of sorrow. Think you here behold her,

‘ The kneeling charmer, lovely in her tears,

‘ Pleading for pity, sinking at your feet,

‘ And dying by your frown.

‘ *Per.* Art thou my friend ?

‘ Oh, merciless ! why dost thou raise before me

‘ This dangerous image ? ’Tis not to be borne.

‘ My brain turns round with madness. Oh, ye Powers !

‘ Why am I not at quiet ? Why is life

‘ Forc'd on the wretch who strongly begs to die,

‘ In bitterness of soul ? Who asks no more

‘ But the grave's shade and silence, there at last

‘ To sleep for ever, nameless and forgotten ?’

Arist. ‘ Alas, for pity !’—I will talk no more
 On this distressful theme.

Per. Ariston, stay.

Spite of these tears, spite of this fond distraction,
 It shall be done. A king may live unhappy,
 But not with loss of honour unreven'g'd.

‘ ’Twas mad to think of this. I will not trust

‘ My eyes against the witchcraft of her charms.’

Then summon all thy firmness, Oh, my soul !

And dare to be accus'd, since thy sad choice

Is shame or misery. I am resolv'd.

Ye gods who watch o'er the chaste marriage-bed,
 Thou Stygian Jove, and all ye powers infernal !
 Behold, I kneel, as in your awful presence :
 By that invisible, that dreaded lake,
 Th' irrevocable oath that binds even you,
 Here I pronounce, and seal her doom of death.

Enter Eurydice ; she kneels to Periander, who, after looking at her some time with emotion, stings away without speaking.

Eur. Not hear me ! not vouchsafe me one poor word !
 'Tis hard indeed—The wretch of many crimes, [Rising.
 Whom mercy dares not save, is gentlier us'd.
 His rigid judge is less severe than mine.

Ye Powers, have I deserved this ! Did my heart
 Ere harbour one loose wish ? Yourselves can tell,
 The morning's orient beam is not more pure,
 More stainless than my truth. Was ever fate,
 Were ever woes like mine ? Even in the hour
 Of general joy to all, while pleasing hope
 Sprung fast within my heart, I find myself
 Undone for ever ; sunk to rise no more.

Not hear me !—then I know my doom is fix'd.
 And shall I stay to hear the foul surmises,
 The scurril taunts, the false upbraiding pity,
 The keen revilings, that must usher in
 My public sentence ? Can there be in death
 Such pangs, such piercing agonies ? Impossible !
 Death is repose and calm, is soft Elysium
 To thoughts like these. I will prevent their triumph,
 And save myself this shame. 'Tis but to lose
 A few unhappy moments ; 'tis to rest
 The sooner from my cares ; to feel no more
 The bitterness of misery and insult
 That bait my weary soul. Then it is fix'd.
 Spite of the woman, no fond tear shall flow,
 No sigh arise, the coward sex to shew.
 When life is shame, and glorious freedom nigh,
 A Grecian and a queen must dare to die.

[Exit.

END of the FOURTH ACT.

ACT

A C T V.

Periander walking disordered, Leonidas following.

LEONIDAS.

O My lov'd master ! have I liv'd to see
This fight of woe ? Alas ! is this to conquer ?
Are these the fruits of victory ?

Per. Away !

Why nam'st thou victory to me, a slave
Subdu'd and tyranniz'd by his worst foes,
His unrelenting passions ? Talk of ruin,
And I will hear thee ; talk of hopeless misery ;
No other strain befits thy master's triumph.

Leon. This is the language of supreme distress,
Impatient of itself. My gracious Lord,
Forgive an old man's talk, who would this moment,
Might his poor life bring back your peace of mind,
With joy resign it.

Per. That were to bring back
The darted sun-beam, ' or recall the flight
' Of unreturning time.' Oh, no ! my soul
Has bid the last farewell to happiness,
To hope itself. And yet I thank thy love,
Indeed I do—But leave me for a while.
I would be private.

Leon. Sir, I dare not leave you—
Forgive these tears—I dare not leave you thus
At variance with yourself. I read too plain
The fatal thought that wakens in your bosom.

Per. And wouldst thou have me live this abject thing ?
This slave of folly ? For I tell thee, blushing
With shame and strong abhorrence of myself,
I cannot tear that woman from my soul,
False, faithless as she is—Then I will die :
That just revenge is still within my power.

Leon. O Jealousy, thou merciless destroyer,
' More cruel than the grave ! what ravages
' Does thy wild war make in the noblest bosoms ?'
Too long, my Lord, you listen to the whispers
Of that domestic foe, that bosom traitor.
For mercy's sake, throw not away so rashly

The jewel of your soul. Some unseen error
Misleads you from the truth, and ruins her.
Grant her a moment's audience.

Per. I have sworn
That she shall die.

Leon. Is then her sacred life
Of so small price, to cast her thus away
With blind precipitance ? Your Queen, my Lord,
The fairest form, the most exalted mind,
Once so ador'd and lov'd, to whom your soul
Still cleaves with fondness ! Can you give her up,
The mother of your darling, Polydore,
Unheard, untry'd, to death and infamy ?
Can you do this ?

‘ *Per.* Oh, thou, whose eye beholds
‘ And pities the frail heart of erring man !
‘ Ruler of heaven and earth ! or still these passions,
‘ That rage in tempest here, or strike in mercy,
‘ And free me from my pain — What can I do ?
‘ My solemn vow is gone up to high heaven,
‘ And wouldest thou have me break it ?

‘ *Leon.* That rash oath
‘ Nor does, nor ought to bind. The gods refuse it.
‘ Should you, too late, discover she is wrong'd —
‘ Think on it well — Oh, what a life of horrors
‘ Remains for you ! I tremble but to name them.
‘ The sad and silent meltings of vain sorrow ;
‘ The thorn of keen remorse ; the sting of love,
‘ Inflam'd by fond reflection, hourly fighing
‘ For what he never, never hopes to find ;
‘ With these, late-coming, but no more to leave you,
‘ Despair accrû'd. Dreadful society !
‘ Yet such will share your day and night, and haunt
‘ Your court, your throne, your solitude, your couch.
‘ Alas, my Lord !’

Per. Oh, by my soul's strong anguish,
I would most gladly blot out from my thoughts
All memory of past time ! I yet would question
The waking evidence of every sense,
To give her back that virtue, those fair beams
That shone on our first loves. Then was I bless'd
Beyond the race of men, belov'd and loving,

Honour'd and happy ; and my name as odour
 Pour'd forth, and breathing freshness all around.
 Oh, days of dear delight ! That I could fix
 For ever there, and think no farther on !
 I will, if possible.

Leon. Oh, happy change !
 Confirm this gentle purpose, favouring Heaven !
 I fly to bring her hither.

Per. Stay thee yet.
 I would resolve, but cannot. Love and rage
 By turns assail me ; melt me now to mercy,
 Now rouze me to distraction—Oh, my heart !

Leon. Then punish the sole cause of all your pangs :
 On the great criminal, on Procles' head
 Discharge the fulness of a righteous vengeance,
 And justify the gods. Let the rack tear
 The traitor's limbs ; and as he howls with anguish,
 Extort confession from him of the lies,
 The dark aspersions, that have well nigh ruin'd
 Your injur'd, virtuous Queen, and tortur'd you.

Per. What hast thou done ? Oh, that detested name !
 Thou know'st not half my madness—that curs'd name
 Has set my brain on blaze, and call'd up there
 Ten thousand furies. Hell ! hast thou not heard
 What shame and scorn, what vileness and confusion
 He heap'd upon my head—and she the cause ?

Leon. Oh, Heaven ! and is this retribution thine ?
 Must virtue know what vice alone should feel ?

Per. Forbear, fond man. That Heaven thou dar'st
 Just, tho' mysterious, leads us on unerring, [accuse,
 Thro' ways unmark'd, from guilt to punishment.
 I vow'd, alas ! and with strong adjurations
 Bound that just vow, to set my country free.
 This, to my father, on his bed of death,
 Solemn I swore—But, Oh, blind lust of greatness !
 Thro' wantonness of will I lightly weigh'd it,
 Nor fear'd the hour of terrible account.
 That hour is come : and what avails it now
 That I with equal hand and gentle rule
 Have sway'd my people ? I am punish'd most,
 Where I had bid my soul be most secure
 Of happiness for years—Ha ! Polydore !

Enter Polydore.

I said I would be private.

Pol. Oh, my father !

Here let me kneel for ever, weep these eyes
To blindness, and ne'er know a thought of comfort.

Per. What would my Polydore ?

Pol. Alas ! what means

This common face of woe that meets my sight
Where'er I turn ? Even now, while happy Corinth
Blazes with triumph ; while the neighbouring shores
Resound to heaven her voice of general joy,
The palace is in tears. Her silent courts
Are dark with mourning, as if Death and Ruin,
Not Victory, had fix'd their mansion here.

Per. There is a cause, my son, a dreadful one.
But leave me to myself.

Pol. Am I then grown
A horror to your eyes ? What is my crime,
That thus, with alienated look, you turn
As from some baleful object ? Yet, my father,
Oft have you sworn, that in this face you saw,
And lov'd your darling Queen.

Per. Away, thy looks,
Thy words distract me.

Pol. Whither shall I fly ?
Where hide this hated head ? My mother too,
As now I left her, pressing full her eyes
With fix'd and earnest mournfulness on mine,
Stream'd into tears ; then clasp'd me to her bosom
With such sad passion, such transported tremblings,
As parting lovers that must meet no more.
I begg'd to know the cause : again she press'd me
With fonder eagerness, and sighing cry'd,
Say to the King, my heart has never err'd.

Per. By Heaven, my soul melts at the piteous tale.
O Polydore —

Enter an Officer.

Off. My Lord, the prisoner, Medon,
Attends, and prays admittance to your presence.

Per. Ha ! Medon ! Dost thou dream ? Medon alive !
Did I not charge thee strict to cast him forth

That

That moment to the fury of the people ?
How hast thou dar'd to disobey ?

Off. Dread Sir,

As to his fate I led him, pale and trembling,
At sight of the tumultuous crowd around,
With utmost instance he requested of me
To save him yet a moment; for he had
Secrets of prime concernment that requir'd
The King's immediate ear. We hardly 'scap'd
Into the southern tower; th' unnumber'd rabble,
With cries and threats, demanded forth their foe.
At hazard of my life I ventur'd down,
Sooth'd, flatter'd, promis'd them they should have justice.
They are but now dispers'd.

Per. Leonidas,

My heart misgives me at that miscreant's name..
But let him enter.

Enter Medon.

Med. O King, renown'd for gentleness and mercy !
The noblest praise ! see prostrate at your feet
A criminal, who comes to merit pardon,
By fair discovery of some weighty truths,
That much import your soul's repose and health.

Per. Say on; and if thy heart has form'd a hope
Of one hour's after-life, take heed thy tale
Be strictly just to truth.

Med. Thus groveling here..

With shame and sharp remorse I own my crime.
Misled by that usurper, who, with me,
Now shares the due reward of guilt like ours,
To pleasure him, unhappy that I was !
I told, I know not what of your good Queen..
Would I had perish'd first ! for all was false,
And she most innocent.

Per. Perdition on thee !

What do I hear ?

Med. I fill'd Ariston's ears
With monstrous tales, which his plain honesty,
Alas ! too rashly credited —

Per. Ye gods !

And could your thunder sleep ? Pernicious slave !
Hadst thou as many lives as crimes, not one.

Should 'scape my justice—‘ Ah, Leonidas !
 ‘ Was ever such black treachery ?’—Forgive thee !
 ‘ Thy doom shall be of signal dread and warning
 ‘ To all succeeding minions.’ Drag him hence,

[To the Guards.]

And guard him at the peril of your heads.

[Exit Medon guarded.]

Leon. Amazing villainy !

Per. Oh, fly, my son !

Find the poor mourner out, and in my name
 Say all that weeping penitence can plead,
 Or love returning promise. My full heart
 Will more than make it good. And may the power
 Of soft persuasion wait upon thy lips. [Exit Polydore.
 As from enchantment freed, the mists disperse
 By which my eyes were held—That injur'd fair !
 How shall I meet her soft forgiving look,
 Whom I so much have wrong'd !

Leon. Thrice happy turn
 Of unexpected fate !

Per. But let me fly
 Into her gentle arms ; there lose the horrors
 That have distracted me ; there lose myself
 In love's ecstatic joys.

Enter Ariston.

In happy time
 Thou com'st, Ariston. We were both deceiv'd,
 And I revoke my order. But curs'd Procles
 Shall pay me dear for all.

Arist. He has, my Lord,
 And the sad tale is terrible. I shrink
 But to recount it. Slumbering conscience rouz'd,
 And flashing in his face the startling prospect
 Of his past life, furious he dash'd his head
 Against his prison walls. I found him fallen ;
 A piteous spectacle ; rolling in blood,
 Deform'd with pain : for agonizing death
 Sat hideous on his brow. Faintly he drew
 His parting breath ; yet all that breath went forth
 In blasphemies, assaulting Heaven with curses,
 The ravings of despair, for frustrating
 His impious purpose on the Queen.

Per.

Per. How dreadful

' This period to a life like his ! ' The hand
Of Heaven is greatly just——But, Oh, my friends,
These strange events have well nigh overturn'd
This tottering brain. I feel I know not what
Of joy and terror, high amaze and transport,
All blended here, and working in wild tumult.

' *Leon.* 'Tis but the motion of a troubled sea,
After sore tempest sinking to a calm.
' All will be well, my Lord. Repose and health
' Await you in her arms. What bliss is yours !
' A second union of your meeting souls !
' A better nuptial morn, with love new-rising,
To shine for ever ! '

Enter Melissa.

Per. *Melissa!* — *Ha!* speak — — —

Mel. Oh, my royal mistress !

The dews of death are cold upon her brow.

Per. What mean thy fatal words ?

Mel. Falsely accus'd
Of what her soul most loaths, and to despair
By your unkindness urg'd, the Queen, alas !
Has drunk a deadly draught.

Per. Oh, heaven and earth !
Are these at last my hopes ? 'Tis I—Oh, horror !
'Tis I have murder'd her — — —

SCENE opening, discovers Eurydice sitting, Polydore
kneeling by her.

Ye righteous gods !

Oh, give her back to life, and to your justice
I bow this guilty head ? — What's to be done ?
Leonidas, Ariston, fly, my friends,
' Call, gather all our sages ; bid them try
' Their sovereign skill.' My crown to him that saves her.

Eur. It cannot be. Already death invades
My shivering bosom. Yet a little moment,
And I shall be with those that rest for ever.
But here, in this last awful hour, I swear,
By that dread world, whither my soul is parting,
I never knew pollution. I am still
Your true and loyal wife.

Per.

Per. I know thou art,
 Thou dying innocence. My fatal blindness,
 Destruction on my head ! has ruin'd thee.
 My life ! my soul's best joy ! and must I lose thee ?
 Lose thee for ever ?—Wretch ! rash fool !—Oh, yet
 Forgive my madness !

Eur. Thus, in thy lov'd arms
 Each unkind thought is lost. Now I die pleas'd :
 Now all is well—Death ! thou art here— [Dies.]

Mel. Ah, she expires ! The last dim mist swims o'er
 Her cloſing eyes !

Per. One moment, thou fair spirit,
 One moment tarry for me—Thus we join,
 To part no more— [He draws his sword to stab himself.]

Arist. Ah ! Sir—

Leon. My Lord, what means
 This fatal fury ?

Per. Cruel men, away.
 And would you then detain me longer here
 On this loath'd spot, to linger out old age
 With darkness and despair ? To curse the hour
 That gave a murderer birth ? Would you, my friends,
 Have me live thus ?

Arist. Ye gods, assuage his grief !

Per. These righteous gods have cast me off for ever.—
 My broken vow—Oh, terrible ! it hangs,
 A bursting thunder, o'er my head. ‘I see,
 ‘And tremble at the sight, th’ enquiring judge,
 ‘Beyond these heavens, high on his throne of terrors,
 ‘His fix’d and dread regard turn’d full upon me !
 ‘And look, behold, the minister of vengeance
 ‘But waits his nod to strike me thro’ the centre !’

Pol. Alas, my father !—

Per. O my son, my son !
 I have undone thee too. How dare I look
 On that dear face, where thy lost mother’s sweetness
 Smiles strong reproach, and charms me into madness ?
 Then farewell, reason ; farewell, human converse ;
 Sun, day, and time, farewell !—All hail, despair !
 Eternal darkness, hail !—Say’st thou I’ve lost her ?
 No, no ; we will not part. Thus let me press
 Her clay-cold lips, thus weep my soul away.

On her chaste bosom here. Oh, yet, my love !
 My better life ! Oh, yet lift up thy eyes !
 Oh, speak to me !

Leon. Alas, she hears you not !
 The soul is fled for ever.

Per. O my Queen !

[He throws himself by the body ; the rest stand weeping
 and silent.]

Arist. Gently raise him.

Per. [Raising himself up.] Ha ! there—save me ! 'tis
 he ! the King of terrors !

Lo, how the ghastly vision glares upon me
 With his fix'd beamless eyes !—What path is this,
 Dreary and deep, thro' which he drags me on ?
 ‘ Blefs me !—look there—what shivering forms are these,
 ‘ Thin as the passing air, that skim around me ?
 ‘ And now th' infernal world hath shut me in.’—
 But see the Furies arm'd ! see their fell serpents,
 That rouze themselves to sting me ! Is there none,
 No power, to screen them from me ?

Leon. Gracious Sir,
 Where is that patience—

Per. Soft—I see her plain.
 Yonder on high she sits amid the gods,
 Who wonder at her charms—And dost thou smile
 Upon thy murderer ?—Thus let me kneel,
 And, weeping, worship thee—Ha ! seest thou there
 Yon flaming pool ? And what damn'd soul is that,
 Rising from the mid deeps, that beckons me ?
 He wafts me still—By hell, 'tis hated Procles,
 The cause of all my ruin !—Traitor, yes,
 I come, I fly, to plunge thee deeper still
 In this red sea of tortures—Oh ! —

Arist. He dies !

Pol. Oh, matchless horror !

Leon. Bear him gently hence.
 Was ever fight like this ?—O Jealousy,
 This is thy dreadful work. May future times
 Learn here thy power, and mark, with heedful eyes,
 From thy blind rage what mighty mischiefs rise.

END of the FIFTH ACT.

E P I L O G U E.

Written by AARON HILL, Esq.

Spoken by a Girl in Boy's cloaths, tripping in hastily.

O H, gentlemen! — I'm come, but was not sent ye :
A voluntier — Pray, does my size content ye ?
Man, I am yours ; sex, bless'd as Heaven can make ye ;
And from this time, weak woman, I forsake ye.
Who'd be a wife, when each new play can teach us,
To what fine ends these lords of ours beseech us ?
At first, whate'er they do, they do — so charming !
But mark what follows ; frightful, and alarming !
They feed too fast on love, then sick'ning tell us,
They can't, forsooth, be kind — because they're jealous.
Who would be woman, then, to sigh and suffer,
And wish, and wait — for the slow-coming proffer ?
Not I — farewell to petticoats and stitching,
And welcome dear, dear breeches, more bewitching.
Henceforth, new-moulded, I'll rove, love, and wander,
And fight, and storm, and charm — like Periander.
Born for this dapper age, pert, short, and clever ;
If e'er I grow a man, 'tis now, or never.

Well, but what conduct suits this transformation ?
I'll copy some smart soul of conversation.
Should there be war, I'd talk of fields and trenches ;
Should there be peace, I'd toast ten favourite wenches.
Should I be lov'd — Gadso ! how then ? No matter ;
I'll bow, as you do, and look foolish at her.
And so, who knows, that never means to prove ye,
But I'm as good a man as any of ye ?

Well, 'tis a charming frolic, and I'll do't :
Sirs, have I your consent ? What say ye to't ?
Yet bold — Perhaps they'll dread a rival beau ;
I may be what I seem, for aught they know.
Ladies, farewell — I should be loth to leave ye,
Could an increase of pretty fellows grieve ye :
Each, like myself, devoted ne'er to harm ye,
And full as fit, no doubt, to serve and charm ye.



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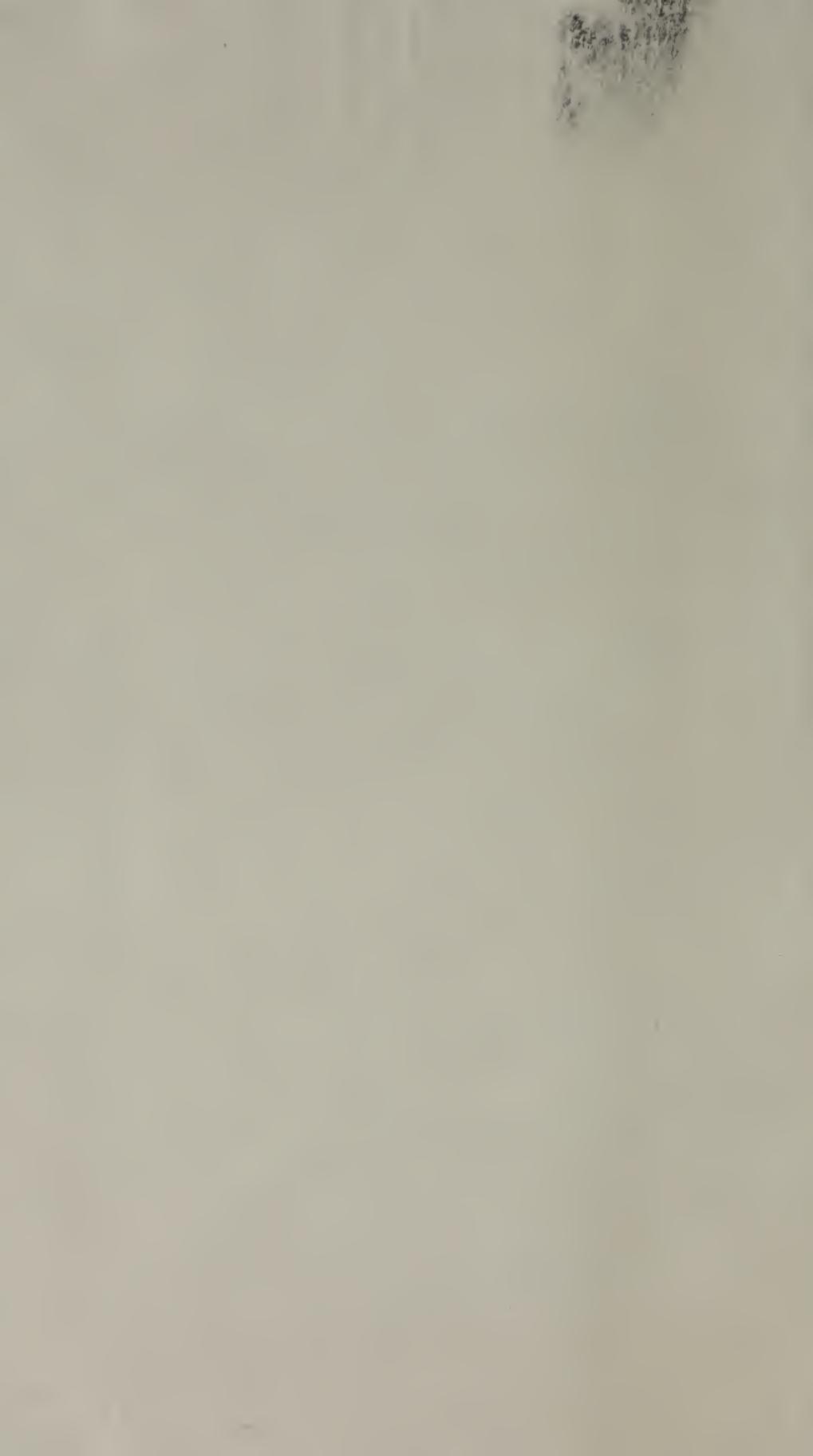
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